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ABSTRACT

This study began as a joint venture between Trent University and Queen's University to identify any existing inadequacies in library service to part-time students, and to determine what could be done to improve access to library resources. Because of the significantly different organizatien of part-time studies at the two schools, two questionnaires were developed and two reports of findings were prepared. Only the Trent report is included in this document; however, the exchange of ideas between the universities was reciprocally useful. The methodology for compiling data included a five question survey of public libraries in the area, a two question survey of nearby university libraries, and a questionnaire which was mailed to part-time students. Comments from the libraries and statistics from the questionnaires are presented. The 13 recommendations proposed at the conclusion of the study call for modification of on-campus services and further development of off-campus facilities. (JAB)

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LIBRARY SERVICE TO PART-TIME STUDENTS AT TRENT UNIVERSITY

A STUDY

Labitur occulte, fallitque volubilis aetas.

Ovid.

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JOHN A. WISEMAN

FEBRUARY, 1976

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B. MAP OF PETERBOROUGH AREA SHOWING OFF-CAMPUS CENTRES

INTRODUCTION:

The impetus for this study came from a number of directions. In President Nind's request for an examination of library services (memorandum to the University Librarian, 27 June, 1974) he singled out service to part-time students, on- and off-campus, as one area of concern; in 1975, the newly constituted Board of Julian Blackburn College saw as one of its objectives, an examination of library services to part-time students, an area which had been problematic for some time; as early as 1972, the Ontario Council for University Continuing Education (OCUCE) also expressed concern in this area, which eventually led to the beginnings of a study undertaken by Mr. L. Orton (formerly Queen's) and Mr. P. Blenkinsop (Laurentian). The progress of this study becomes vague at this point, but it was finally agreed, at the Spring 1975 meeting of OCUCE, that the study should continue as a joint venture between Queen's University and Trent University, the former being represented by Mr. Larry Orton of the Department of Extension, and the latter by myself.

The first step was to develop a questionnaire suitable for all types of part-time students. It was hoped that one model could be developed that would serve the informational needs of both universities, but because of differences in approaches to and the organization of part-time studies, and the fact that the Queen's survey deals only with off-campus students, this proved to be impractical. Nevertheless, a useful exchange of ideas took place and two questionnaires, tailored to the needs of each institution were produced. This has led inevitably to the production of two distinct reports, but a copy of the Queen's report is available for those interested.

While the Queen's report is based largely, if not entirely, upon the questionnaire, three approaches were taken at Trent University. First, public libraries adjacent to off-campus centres were contacted and asked five basic questions regarding the needs of off-campus students and the ability of public libraries to fulfil them; the results appear later in the report. Second, a number of university libraries were posed two basic questions regarding their services for part-time students; these, too, are summarized later. Finally, a questionnaire was distributed to all part-time students, on- and off-campus, the results of which constitute the major part of this report.

For the purposes of this study three types of student may be identified: those taking on-campus courses during the day, and are, therefore, able to use library facilities on much the same basis as full-time students; those taking on-campus courses after normal hours of employment and use the library in the evening and at weekends; those taking off-campus courses with all the concomitant problems of library service. A fourth category should be mentioned which encompasses those students who take both on- and off-campus courses; however, their problems will be considered under the other categories given above. Before taking up the specific problems of part-time students, an outline of library resources presently available to them in this area would be useful.

The resources of the University Library are too well known to need documentation here. The hours of opening are fairly generous, providing as they do accessibility for 93.5 hours per week. The public library contains approximately 110,000 volumes, is open 64 hours per week, which includes evening and weekend service, and can provide professional assistance. Sir Sandford Fleming College offers 48 hours of service per week at the Brealey Campus and 60 hours at

the McDonnel Street location. In the latter case there is some evening service to 9:00 p.m., but neither campus offers weekend facilities. Professional assistance is available. Through a reciprocal agreement, Trent University students may borrow from the Sir Sandford Fleming College Library. They also have access to the Peterborough Public Library.

Basic Statistics:

286 questionnaires were processed which represents 25.09% of the total number distributed. Of these, 25.88% (74) took on-campus and off-campus courses, 44.76% (128) took only on-campus courses, while 29.37% (84) took only off-campus courses. Consequently, of the 286 respondents, 55.24% (158) were involved in off-campus courses and 70.63% (202) with on-campus courses.

Below is a table showing the distances from places of residence to Bata Library:

TABLE 1

Miles	Responses	Percentage of Total	Cumulated Percentage
5	66	23.08	23.08
10	36	12.59	35.66
20	11	3.85	39.51
30	24	8.39	47.90
40	63	22.03	69.93
50	33	11.54	81.47
60	12	4.20	85.66
70	22	7.69	93.36
70+	10	3.50	96.85
Unknown	9	3.15	100.00

It will be seen from this table that almost 70% of all part-time students responding reside within a forty mile perimeter.

On-Campus Services:

Section B of the questionnaire deals with Bata Library. To improve the usefulness of the responses they were divided into users (201) and non-users (85).

Of those who are users of Bata Library, 81.5% live forty miles or less from it, while an almost equal proportion of non-users (80.1%) live forty miles or more from the Library (see Appendix "B" and Table 2). Clearly, distance is one important factor. Time to use the library is also an important consideration. As one student summarized the problems of part-time students: "Distance and small (local) centers and time limits play their parts." These factors permeate the study and its recommendations.

The responses to Section B are summarized as follows and pertain to Library users only:

B.6-7 43.3% of the users visited the B.L. less than once per week (once or twice per month was number most often cited as frequency); 18.4% once per week, and 38.3% more than once per week.

B.8-9 54.2% of users visited the B.L. during both weekends and weekdays. 30.4% came on weekdays only; 14.4% on weekends only; 1% did not respond.

B.9A Of the users who visited the B.L. on a weekday, 37.3% came during the evening only, 25.9% during the day only, 14.9% during both day and evening; 21.9% did not respond.

B.10 88.1% of the users found the hours convenient, 9.5% did not, and 2.5% did not respond.

B.11 51.2% of the users found the loan period convenient, 47.3% did not, and 1.5% did not respond.

B.12 59.2% thought that the reserve system was satisfactory, 32.3% did not, and 8.5% did not respond.

B.13 47.3% indicated difficulty in finding materials, 46.8% did not, 6.0% did not respond.

TABLE 2

	USERS				NON-USERS				
	Relat. Freq. N	%	Cum. Freq. N	%	Relat. Freq. N	%	Cum. Freq. N	%	%
5 miles	63	31.3	63	31.3	3	3.5	3	3.5	89.5
10 miles	36	17.9	99	49.2	0	.0	3	3.5	86.0
20 miles	8	4.0	107	53.2	3	3.5	6	7.0	86.0
30 miles	22	10.9	129	64.1	2	2.4	8	9.4	82.5
40 miles	35	17.4	164	81.5	28	32.9	36	42.3	80.1
50 miles	14	7.0	178	88.5	19	22.4	55	64.7	47.2
60 miles	7	3.5	185	92.0	5	5.9	60	70.6	24.8
70 miles	12	6.0	197	98.0	10	11.8	70	82.4	18.9
more than 70 miles	4	2.0	201	100.0	6	7.1	76	89.5	7.1
No response		0.0			9	10.5	85		

Distance breakdown of Bata Library Users and Non-Users

Distance of 40 miles appears to be the cut-off point:

81.5% of users live 40 miles or less

80.1% of non-users live 40 miles or more.

Users = 201 (70.28%)

Non-Users = 85 (29.72%)

B.14 78.6% felt that there was sufficient assistance, 13.4% did not, 8.0% did not respond.

B.15 Only 24.4% used interlibrary loans, 67.7% did not, and 8.0% did not respond.

The majority of users found library hours to be convenient (B.10), but of those students who commented (15) there were a number who would like to see the weekend hours extended; it seems likely, therefore, that, if this were accomplished, more students would take advantage of weekends for visits to the library.

As the statistics indicate, opinion was sharply divided on the question of the loan period (B.11). However, 23% commented on this question, making it clear that many of them think the loan period is too short; in a number of instances, two weeks was cited as being reasonable.

With regard to the reserve system (B.12), sufficient dissatisfaction was expressed (32.3%) to require further analysis of the returns. In the written comments (40) the commonest complaints were: not enough copies on reserve; overnight loans impractical for many part-time students; two hour loans often meaningless for part-timers. Another suggestion was that overnight loans should be available at 4:00 p.m., to accommodate housewives.

Students also expressed difficulty in finding materials (B.13). The problems here seemed to be with missing books, misplaced materials, and basic works already on loan when the part-timer makes a visit to the Library, a problem often compounded by the infrequency of such visits; again, the question of more copies was raised. In addition, many part-time students are unable to take full advantage of the reference services offered, services which can do much to alleviate information retrieval problems.

Finally, in this section (B.15), it is notable that such a high percentage of students do not use interlibrary

loans (67.7%). This, again, clearly indicates the type of problem part-time students encounter in a system primarily geared to students who are on-campus more or less all of the time.

Off-Campus Services

In examining off-campus facilities it was deemed useful to analyze the data along these lines: Non-users, off-campus courses, and all types.
The data are summarized as follows:

C.16 Non-users: 91.8% indicated easy access to the local library, 3.4% said no, 4.7% did not respond.

C.16 Off-campus courses: 70% said that they had easy access to a local library, 3.6% said no, 26.4% did not respond.

C.16 ALL: 81.1% indicated easy access to the local library, 4.5% said no, 14.3% did not respond.

C.17 Non-users: 78.8% used these facilities, 11.8% did not, 9.4% did not respond.

C.17 Off-campus courses: 52.9% used these facilities, 18.6% did not, 28.6% did not respond.

C.17 ALL: 68.5% used these facilities, 13.6% did not, 17.8% did not respond.

C.18 Non-Users: 45.9% thought these facilities were adequate, 45.9% thought not, and 8.2% did not respond.

C.18 Off-Campus courses: 24.3% thought these facilities were adequate, 41.4% thought not, 34.3% did not respond.

C.18 ALL: 31.8% thought these facilities were adequate, 47.2% thought not, 21% did not respond.

C.19 Non-Users: 57.6% did not use interlibrary loans through the local library, 31.8% did, 10.6% did not respond.

C.19 Off-Campus Courses: 55.7% did not use interlibrary loans through the local library, 15.0% did, 29.3% did not respond.

C.19 ALL: 54.5% did not use interlibrary loans through local library, 26.6% did, 18.9% did not respond.

C.20 Non-Users: 84.7% said library materials were not supplied at place of instruction, 9.4% said yes, 5.9% did not respond.

C.20 Off-Campus Courses: 27.1% said library materials were not supplied at place of instruction, 32.9% said yes, 40% did not respond.

C.20 ALL: 52.4% said library materials were not supplied at place of instruction, 25.9% said yes, 21.7% did not respond.

C.21 Non-Users: 20.0% said materials supplied at place of instruction wasn't the only source, 4.7% said yes, 75.3% did not respond.

C.21 Off-Campus Courses: 29.3% said materials supplied at place of instruction wasn't the only source, 7.1% said yes, 63.6% did not respond.

C.21 ALL: 28.7% said materials supplied at place of instruction wasn't the only source, 5.9% said yes, 65.4% did not respond.

C.22 Non-Users: 20.0% said as only source, it is not adequate, 5.9% said yes, 74.1% did not respond.

C.22 Off-Campus courses: 6.4% said as only source, it is not adequate, 11.4% said yes, 82.1% did not respond.

C.22 ALL: 12.5% said as only source it is not adequate, 10.5% said yes, 78% did not respond.

It will be seen from the statistics that the majority of students have access to local library facilities and use them (C.16, C.17). The contentious area is the adequacy of these collections (C.18). In commenting upon their local library facilities, the most frequent complaint was that local public library collections were generally limited and inadequate for university courses (see Appendix "A", question 1). While this is particularly true for small centres such as Cobourg and Port Hope, the Oshawa public library, which has fairly good resources, was also criticized, but for a different reason: in this conurbation there are many students taking university courses with a resultant drain on resources, a problem which may not have been recognized by the library's staff.

With regard to the use of interlibrary loans through the public library, the main problem encountered here is the same as that for Bata Library (B.15), which is the often lengthy time factor involved in satisfying requests for material through this system.

The high no-response rate for C.21 and C.22 is probably due to the fact that a large percentage said materials were not supplied at place of instruction (C.20).

Comments from Public Libraries:

Public librarians within the area encompassing off-campus courses responded either verbally or in writing to the following questions:

1. Are your resources adequate without assistance from the University?
2. Do you rely heavily upon interlibrary loan services?
3. Who should provide library materials, the university or the public library?
4. Are you able to provide professional staff assistance for this category of reader?

5. If the answer to this last question is "no", would you welcome assistance from the university's professional library staff?

The results are tabulated in Appendix "A".

Generally, public librarians are willing to cooperate with the university in assisting part-time students, providing it is not to the detriment of the remainder of their patrons, and providing the costs are either borne by the university, or are shared in some equitable way. The future usefulness of material to the public library when the course is finished is often a consideration here.

The importance of adequate library materials to the success of an off-campus course cannot be stressed enough, as the experience of one librarian shows. In this case, students waited three to four weeks for books to be supplied by the university, a delay which caused a number to drop out.

Another problem arises from the hours of business for some libraries. Bancroft, for example, is only open on Tuesdays, from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m., on Fridays from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and Saturdays from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Clearly, where hours are so limited, the placing of the university collection should be considered very carefully.

These are just some of the concerns which can be met with careful planning and good, cooperative attitudes on both sides. As one public librarian put it: "I think that any increased cooperation between us is of benefit to both."

Practices in Other Provincial Universities:

As may be expected, other universities in the province report a variety of practices aimed at assisting part-time students. Some have deliberately designed their rules and regulations with these students in mind. As one librarian

pointed out, part-time students represent probably 60%+ of his university's enrolment! Others are willing to bend the rules in certain cases of difficulty.

Placing collections in local instructional centres and public libraries is not uncommon, and, as mentioned earlier, many public librarians are willing to cooperate. As an example of how this can be developed, it is worth noting that Ottawa has a part-time student population in excess of 6,000 and gave 92 extension courses in 8 off-campus centres during 1974/75. To accomplish this, and provide for future courses, three major libraries have been organized of 10,000, 2,600 and 1,000 volumes. These are mobile and interchangeable, depending upon course schedules and locations.

Mail service is another type of facility offered by a handful of universities to off-campus students. The Queen's service has been under review, and comments upon it may be found in the Queen's report mentioned earlier. Waterloo offers mail service on an ad hoc basis, noting that by not advertising it, they have managed to handle it from the point of view of staff time and budget (mail charges).

Some of these options were posed in the questionnaire, and the results are given in Table 3.

Predictably, Bata Library was first choice for many students. Second choice, a collection in the public library rather than in the place of instruction (3rd choice) is interesting. Presumably, this arrangement makes the university collection more readily accessible, and also allows the student to take advantage of the public library's own resources and, where it exists, professional assistance. However, as the figures for the 2nd and 3rd choices are close, and for that matter, not too far removed from those for 4th place, the paramount factor must be, not where the collections are placed, but that they are provided. This tends to confirm the belief, expressed under "off-campus services", that most public libraries cannot support academic

TABLE 3

QUESTIONNAIRE SECTION 'D'

TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES - 286 (ALL)

CHOICE (RANK)

		NO RESPONSE		1st		2nd		3rd		4th		5th		6th	
RANK		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Trent	1	82	28.7	119	41.6	16	5.6	20	7.0	22	7.7	23	8.0	4	1.4
Public, Regional	4	112	39.2	49	17.1	35	12.2	44	15.4	27	9.4	15	5.2	4	1.4
Coll. in Institute	3	125	43.7	61	21.3	54	18.9	21	7.3	13	4.5	8	2.8	4	1.4
Coll. in Public Library	2	107	37.4	60	21.0	45	15.7	40	14.0	23	8.0	11	3.8	0	.0
Mail Service	5	140	49.0	17	5.9	21	7.3	19	6.6	35	12.2	52	18.2	2	.7
Other	6	243	85.0	17	5.9	3	1.0	2	.7	1	.3	6	2.1	14	4.9

courses without substantial support from the University.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

It has long been a philosophy at Trent University that part-time students should be treated in exactly the same way as those enrolled full-time, and should enjoy all the benefits and advantages, academic and otherwise, available to the full-time students. In this spirit, the staff of Thomas J. Bata Library has endeavoured to give all students the best service possible. Perhaps, what has not been fully recognized in the past is the sometimes severe time-limitations which affect many part-time students. A number live great distances from the campus, some take courses in remote areas, and many have onerous work and family commitments which make the optimum use of Bata Library extremely difficult. This is not to say that these students necessarily must be granted "concessions" far beyond those granted to other students, but rather that library services should be re-examined and, where feasible, modified to ensure that all students have reasonable access to, and the use of, the collections.

It must be recognized that the part-time studies population is expected to increase, if it is not doing so already. The advent of the Open Academy and the growth of continuing education generally will offer a variety of new challenges to universities and their library systems, and having turned the community on to the idea of continuing education, we must be careful not to turn would-be students off by obstacles which impede their access to the resources which are the life-blood of learning.

This study and its recommendations, then, provide a unique opportunity to design library services which will accommodate the participation of the community-at-large in higher education. It is in this spirit that the following recommendations are offered.

It is recommended that:

1. The hours of business for Bata Library be extended on Saturdays and Sundays.
2. The loan period be reviewed.
3. Renewal and return procedures be reviewed.
4. A reserve collection be developed specifically and exclusively for part-time students.
5. In the light of recommendation 4, the number of copies of core materials be increased.
6. A professional information service be set up for part-time students with particular "access" difficulties.
7. Weekend orientation and bibliographic training seminars be organized.
8. Core collection for off-campus centres be developed and rationalized.
9. More liaison between the university library and public library centres be encouraged and explored.
10. Visits to off-campus centres and adjacent library centres be instituted so that professional library staff may advise and assist students and public librarians.
11. A member of the professional library staff of Bata Library be made responsible for developing, coordinating, and supervising all aspects of library service to part-time students.
12. Thomas J. Bata Library be responsible for the acquisition and processing of materials for off-campus centres.
13. In view of the fiscal restraints obtaining in the university and in Bata Library, the funding implications of these recommendations be explored jointly by Thomas J. Bata Library and Julian Blackburn College.

It will be observed that these recommendations fall roughly into two categories: modifications to on-campus services, and the further development of off-campus facilities. Ideally, of course, part-time students should be able to use fully the facilities of Bata Library, but as this is not always possible, as is evident from the study, the former group of recommendations should take care of students who can, and do, visit the campus, that is, those living within roughly a forty mile perimeter. The latter group, on the other hand, ought to assist in providing a reasonable, though not complete, substitute for Bata Library for those students in the nether regions.

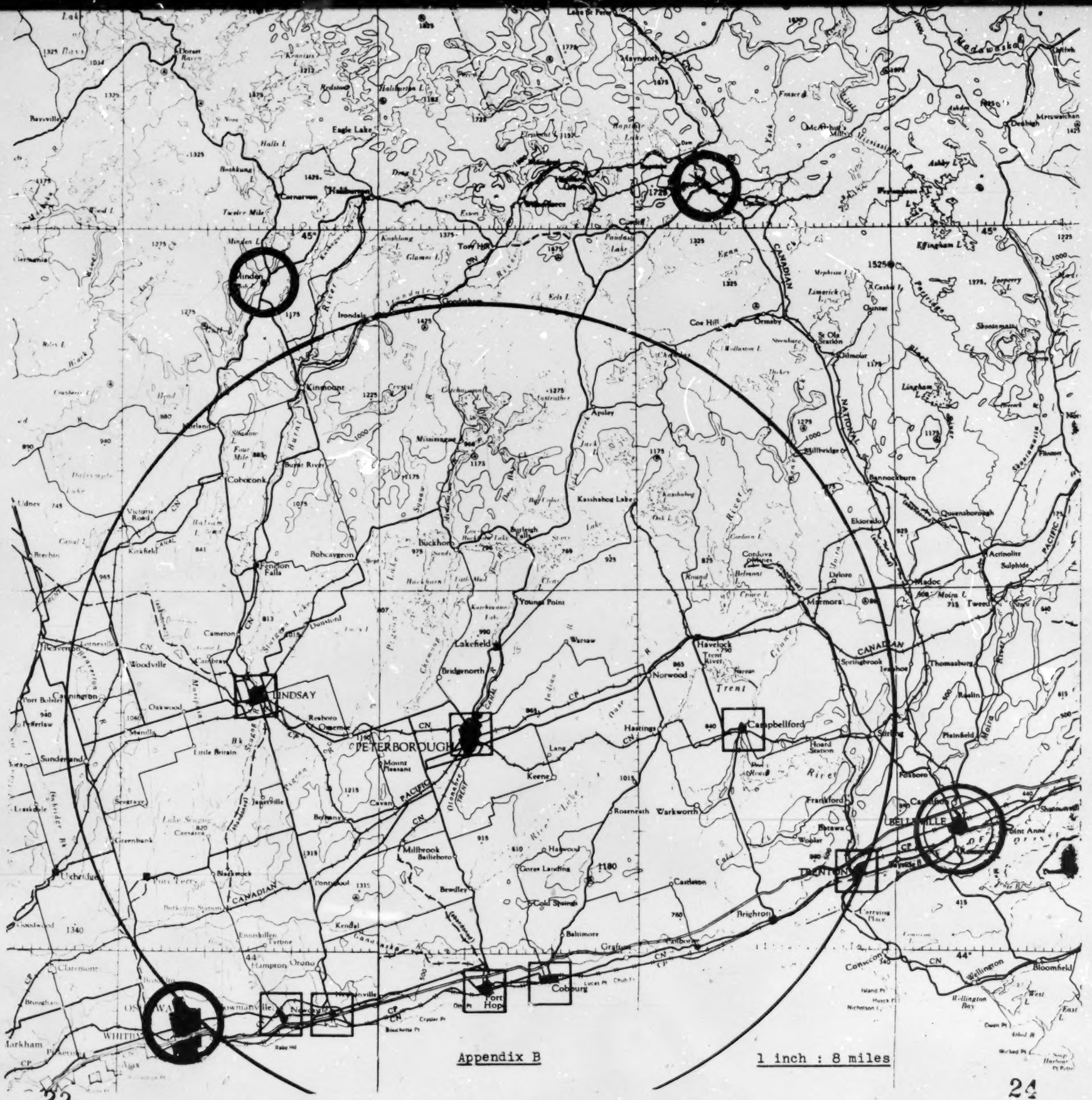
In this regard, it should be noted that a current consideration in the part-time education debate is the feasibility, and advisability, of allowing students to complete full degree programs off campus. As far as developing expertise in using libraries and learning bibliographic techniques are concerned, these can be taught off campus, but it is in their application that contact with a good academic library becomes important.

Consequently, some of the recommendations are designed to encourage those students who do not normally use Bata Library to take some advantage of the on-campus facilities, if only on a limited number of occasions in the year.

PART-TIME STUDENTS - LIBRARY PROVISION

PUBLIC LIBRARY SURVEY

PUBLIC LIBRARIES	1. Are your resources adequate without assistance from the University?	2. Do you rely heavily upon interlibrary loan services?	3. Who should provide library materials, the university or the public library?	4. Are you able to provide professional staff assistance for this category of reader?	5. If the answer to this last question is "no" would you welcome assistance from the university's professional library staff?
Bancroft	NO	Yes, borrowed some from Belleville.	University	YES	
Belleville	Not really	Yes, to a certain extent.	University, for the most part.	YES	-
Newcastle (Bowmanville Branch)	NO	YES	BOTH	YES	YES
Cobourg	NO	YES	University	Yes, one professional - time very limited.	YES
Minden	NO	YES	BOTH	YES	-
Campbellford	NO	NO	University	YES (but minimal)	YES
Oshawa	NO	YES	University (Funding a problem for Public Library)	YES	-
Port Hope	NO	YES	BOTH	NO	Don't know (Would probably accept help).


LINDSAY
PETERBOROUGH
Campbellford
BELLEVILLE
TRENTON
Cobourg
Port Hope
Lakefield
Bridgenorth
Norwood
Havelock
Marmora
Madoc
Coboconk
Kinmount
Minden
Haliburton
Irondale
Buckhorn
Young's Point
Warsaw
Keene
Warkworth
Frankford
Brighton
Colborne
Millbrook
Peterborough
Lindsay
Trent
Otonabee
Scugog
Gull
Burnt
Mississagua
Kasshabog Lake
Deloro
Bloomfield
Wellington
Prince Edward Bay
Quinte
Bay of
Lake Ontario
CANADIAN
PACIFIC
NATIONAL
Appendix B
1 inch : 8 miles
23
24